

**Cross-Cultural Communication**

Vol. 9, No. 4, 2013, pp. 23-29

DOI: 10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020130904.2598

ISSN 1712-8358[Print]

ISSN 1923-6700[Online]

www.cscanada.netwww.cscanada.org

Yoruba Culture of Nigeria: Creating Space for an Endangered Specie

Adepeju Oti^{[a],*}; Oyebola Ayeni^[b]^[a]Ph.D, Née Aderogba. Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria.^[b]Ph.D. Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria.

*Corresponding author.

Received 16 March 2013; accepted 11 July 2013

Abstract

The history of colonisation dates back to the 19th Century. Africa and indeed Nigeria could not exercise her sovereignty during this period. In fact, the experience of colonisation was a bitter sweet experience for the continent of Africa and indeed Nigeria, this is because the same colonialist and explorers who exploited the African and Nigerian economy; using it to develop theirs, were the same people who brought western education, modern health care, writing and recently technology. The challenge therefore is even though Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and the colonialist physically gone and there is no denying that they left some positive legacies, but Nigerians and indeed the Yoruba ethnicity have become Europeans in black skin. Using existing literature and observation, this paper therefore examines the negative impact of colonial influence on the Yoruba ethnicity, culture, values and language, which posits it as endangered specie, a culture that is fast losing space among elitist homes, public and private and schools. The paper recommends the use of mother tongue, traditional attire, bearing of traditional names and eating of local foods among Yoruba ethnicity and the continued inclusion of mother tongue as compulsory subject.

Key words: Yoruba culture; Nigeria; Endangered specie

Adepeju Oti, Oyebola Ayeni (2013). Yoruba Culture of Nigeria: Creating Space for an Endangered Specie. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 9(4), 23-29. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/j.ccc.1923670020130904.2598>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020130904.2598>

INTRODUCTION

Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving (Hofstede, 1997). It is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. The position that the ideas, meanings, beliefs and values people learn as members of society determines human nature. People are what they learn, therefore, culture ultimately determine the quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellent in arts, letters, manners and scholarly pursuits and many more. It is a particular stage or form of civilization (Johnson, 1921)

Different cultural groups think, feel, and act differently. There are no scientific standards for considering one group as intrinsically superior or inferior to another. Culture is considered to be the tradition of that people and is transmitted from generation to generation. This varies worldwide in relation to the different group in terms of the eating habit, kind of food eaten, language, music, dressing, and the like. On a general note, Africans especially the Yoruba's are considered to be rich in terms of culture and tradition (Babatunde, 1992; Akintoye, 2010).

The name *Yoruba* was applied to all linguistically and culturally related peoples. The Yoruba People, of whom there are more than thirty-five million (CIA World Fact book, 2012), occupy the southwestern corner of Nigeria along the Dahomey border and extends into Dahomey itself. To the east and north the Yoruba culture reaches its approximate limits in the region of the Niger River. However ancestral cultures directly related to the Yoruba once flourished well north of the Niger (Fadipe, 1970). Portuguese explorers "discovered" the Yoruba cities

and kingdoms in the fifteenth century, but cities such as Ife and Benin, among others, had been standing at their present sites for at least five hundred years before the European arrival. Archeological evidence indicates that a technologically and artistically advanced (Eades, 1980). Yoruba were living somewhat north of the Niger in the first millennium B.C., and they were then already working with iron.

Ifa theology states that the creation of humankind arose in the sacred city of Ile Ife where Oduduwa created dry land from water (Adewale, 1986). Much later on an unknown number of Africans migrated from Mecca to Ile Ife (Fadipe, 1970). At this point the Eastern Africans and Western Africans synergized.

Ife was the first of all Yoruba cities, Oyo and Benin came later and grew and expanded as a consequence of their strategic locations at a time when trading became prosperous (Akogun, 2011). Ife, unlike Benin and Oyo, never developed onto a true kingdom; but though it remained a city-state it had paramount importance to Yoruba's as the original sacred city and the dispenser of basic religious thought (CIA World, 2012). Until relatively recent times the Yoruba's did not consider themselves a single people, but rather as citizens of Oyo, Benin, Yaba and other cities, regions or kingdoms Babatunde, (1992). The old Yoruba cities typically were urban centers with surrounding farmlands that extended outward as much as a dozen miles or more. Both Benin and Oyo are said to have been founded by Ife rulers or descendants of Ife rulers. Benin derived its knowledge of brass casting directly from Ife (Babatunde, 1992), and the religious system of divining called Ifa spread from Ife not only throughout the Yoruba country but to other West African cultures as well (Bascom, 1969). A common Yoruba belief system dominated the region from the Niger, where it flows in an easterly direction, all the way to the Gulf of Guinea in the south.

It is no accident that the Yoruba cultural influence spread across the Atlantic to the Americas. Yoruba slaves were sent to British, French, Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the New World, and in a number of these places (Eades, 1980). Yoruba traditions survived strongly in Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago. Yoruba religious rites, beliefs, music and myths are evident even at this late day. In Haiti the Yoruba's were generally called Anagos. Afro-Haitian religious activities give Yoruba rites and beliefs an honored place, and the pantheon includes numerous deities of Yoruba origin. Also, more than one-third of Afro-Brazilians claim Yoruba ancestry (Fadipe, 1970). Yoruba culture is famously visible in Bahia, Brazil, manifesting in everything from its religion to its music; in Brazil, Yoruba religious activities are called Anago or Shango, and in Cuba they are designated Lucumi (Babatunde, 1983; Akintoye, 2010).

There are salient structures that constitute the Yoruba plethora of cultures and traditions. The most prominent are the Yoruba political structure, the social fabric, the sociology of the race, especially in areas relating to love, marriage, food, music, dressing, language, inheritance, in-laws, respect for elders, and unmatched love for neighbours and everybody a Yoruba person has contact with Akogun, (2011) banking system are some of the cultural tenets that define the Yorubas (Fadipe, 1970).

ORIGIN AND LOCATION

Oral history of the Yoruba recounts **Odùduwà** to be the Progenitor of the Yoruba and the reigning ancestor of their crowned kings. Upon the disappearance of Oduduwa, there was a dispersal of his children from Ife to found other kingdoms. Each making their mark in the subsequent urbanization and consolidation of Yoruba confederacy of kingdoms, with each kingdom tracing its origin to Ile-Ife (Babatunde, 1992). After the dispersal, the aborigines became difficult, and constituted a serious threat to the survival of Ife. Thought to be survivors of the old occupants of the land before the arrival of Oduduwa, these people now turned themselves into marauders. They would come to town in costumes made of raffia with terrible and fearsome appearances, and burn down houses and loot the markets. Then came Moremi on the scene; she was said to have played a significant role in the quelling of the marauders advancements (Babatunde, 1983). But this was at a great price; having to give up her only son Oluorogbo. The reward for her patriotism and selflessness was not to be reaped in one life time as she later passed on and was thereafter immortalised. The Edi festival celebrates this feat till date (Fadipe, 1970).

The Yoruba people live mostly in Southwestern Nigeria. Traditionally, the Yorubas organized themselves into networks of related villages, towns and kingdoms; with most of them headed by an Oba (King) or Baale (a nobleman or mayor). The chief Yoruba cities/towns are Ilesa, Ibadan, Fiditi, Orile Igbon, Eko (Lagos), Oto-Awori, Ejigbo, Ijebu Ode, Abeokuta, Akure, Ilorin, Ijebu-Igbo, Ijebu-Oru, Ijebu-Awa, Ijebu-ife, Odogbolu, Ogbomoso, Ondo, Ota, Ado-Ekiti, Ikare, Ayere, Kabba, Omuo, Omu-Aran, Egbe, Isanlu, Mopa, Aiyetoro - Gbedde, Sagamu, Iperu, Ikenné, Ogere, Ilisan, Osogbo, Offa, Iwo, Ilesa, Esa-Oke, Oyo, Ilé-Ifé, Iree, Owo, Ede, Badagry, (Owu, Oyo), (Owu, Egba) (ife-olukotun), Ilaro, Oko, Esie, Ago-Iwoye, Iragbiji, Aagba, Ororuwo, Aada, Akungba and Akoko (Johnson, 1921; Fadipe 1970). There are other towns and cities with historical affiliation with the Yoruba people because they share one or more similarities together. Some of these cities and towns are Benin city, Warri, Auchi and Okene. They have developed a variety of different artistic forms including pottery, weaving,

beadwork, metalwork, and mask making. Most artwork is made to honour the gods and ancestors and since there are more than 401 known gods to the Yoruba there is much sculpture and artwork made (Babatunde, 1983; Akintoye, 2010).

PRE-COLONIAL GOVERNMENT OF YORUBA SOCIETY

Traditionally kingship and chieftainship were not determined by simple primogeniture, as in most monarchic systems of government. Monarchies were a common form of government in Yorubaland, but they were not the only approach to government and social organisation. The numerous Ijebu city-states to the west of Oyo and the Egbas communities, found in the forests below Oyo's savannah region, were notable exceptions. These independent polities often elected an *Qba*, though real political, legislative, and judicial powers resided with the *Ogboni*, a council of notable elders. The notion of the divine king was so important to the Yoruba, that it has been part of their organisation in its various forms from their antiquity to the contemporary era.

During the internecine wars of the 19th century, the Ijebu forced citizens of more than 150 Egbas and Owu communities to migrate to the fortified city of Abeokuta. Each quarter retained its own *Ogboni* council of civilian leaders, along with an *Olorogun*, or council of military leaders, and in some cases its own elected *Obas* or *Baales*. Opposite the king's palace is the *Qja Qba*, or the king's market. These markets form an inherent part of Yoruba life. Traditionally their traders are well organized, have various guilds, officers, and an elected speaker. They also often have at least one *Iyaloja*, or Lady of the Market, who is expected to represent their interests in the aristocratic council of *oloyes* (Paramount Chiefs) at the palace.

YORUBA'S TRADITIONAL RELIGION

The Yoruba faith, variously known as *Aborisha*, *Orisha-Ifa* or simply (and erroneously) *Ifa*, is commonly seen as one of the principal components of the syncretic pool known as the African traditional religions. It largely survived the so-called middle passage, and is seen in a variety of forms in the New World as a result. Ife bronze casting of a king dated around the 12th Century, currently in the British Museum. *Orisa'nla* (The great divinity) also known as *Qbatala* was the arch-divinity chosen by *Olodumare*, the Supreme god, to create solid land out of the primordial water that constituted the earth and populating the land with human beings. *Qbatala* descended from heaven on a chain, carrying a small snail shell full of earth, palm kernels and a five-toed chicken. He was to empty the content of the snail shell on the

water after placing some pieces of iron on it, and then to place the chicken on the earth to spread it over the primordial water.

MUSIC AND DANCE

Music and dance have always been an important part of Yoruba culture for those living in Nigeria as well as in the diaspora. Yoruba music and dance are used for many different occasions in life such as religious festivals, royal occasions, and entertainment. Yoruba traditional music focuses on Yoruba deities. Drums and singing are the main elements of Yoruba music. Instruments such as metal bells and wind instruments are sometimes used. Yoruba is a tonal language. Words must be pronounced in the appropriate tone (pitch) in order to understand speech in its correct meaning. There are three major tones: high, mid, and low. Most of Yoruba music is based on these tonal patterns of speech.

Juju music emerged in the 1920's and is the most well-known form of Yoruba popular contemporary music in Nigeria. Juju has its roots in traditional Yoruba drum based music. Juju is dance music played by large ensembles centred on guitars and drumming. Singing is a major part of Juju music and is inspired by Yoruba poetry, proverbs, praise songs, and the musical character of the language.

YORUBA TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

For a man or a woman who has reached the age of marriage to remain single is against the mores of the Yorubas. Men get married even when they are sexually impotent in order to save either their faces or the faces of their immediate relatives, as well as to get one to look after their domestic establishment.

There are six important steps leading to the traditional Yoruba marriage:

- The time for seeking a potential spouse (*Igba ifojusode*)
- The approval of the oracle-divinity (*Ifa f'ore*)
- The release of the voice of the young woman (*Isihun*)
- The request for the young woman's hand in marriage (*Itoro*)
- The creation of the affinity bond (*Idana*)
- The transfer of the wife to the husband's lineage (*Igbeyawo*).

YORUBA ATTIRE

Yoruba people are well known for their attire. Clothing materials traditionally come from processed cotton by traditional weavers. The Yoruba have a very wide range of clothing. The basic being the *Aso-Oke*, which comes in different colours and patterns.

Some common styles are:

- *Alaari* – a rich red *Aṣọ-Oke*
- *Sanyan*- a brown and usual light brown *Aṣọ-Oke*, and
- *Ẹtu*- a dark blue *Aṣọ-Oke*.

OTHER CLOTHING MATERIALS INCLUDE

- *Ofi*- pure white yarned cloths, used as cover cloth, it can be sewn and worn.
- *Aran*- a velvet clothing material sewn into *Danṣiki* and *Kembe*, worn by the rich.
- *Adirẹ*- cloth with various patterns and designs, dye in indigo ink (*Ẹlu*).

Yoruba wears are gender sensitive. Men wear *Kembe*, *Dandogo*, *Danṣiki*, *Agbada*, *Buba*, *Ṣokoto* and matching caps such as (*AbetiAja*), dog ear-shaped cap, *fila-etu*, etc. Women wear *Iro* (wrapper) and *Buba* (the top) with a matching head-gear (*gele*). For important outings, a Yoruba woman will add a Shawl (*Ipele/Iborun*) on the shoulder and can add different forms of accessories.

The Yoruba believe that development of a nation is akin to the development of a man or woman. Therefore the personality of an individual has to be developed in order to fulfill his or her responsibilities. Clothing among the Yoruba people is a crucial factor upon which the personality of an individual is anchored. This philosophy is anchored in Yoruba proverbs. Different occasions also require different outfits among the Yoruba

YORUBA HAIR STYLE

Head occupies a pre-eminent place compare with other parts of the body; so too, the hair that covers the head. The culture and tradition of hair-do is rooted in both spiritual and biological roles of individual head. The head is treasured and respected, because, it is the center of body activity; through hair-do and care, *Ori* (head) is highly esteemed. In times past, even at present hair-dos or styles perform several roles among Yorubas; these functions or roles include: medium of communication, mark of initiation, state of mind, religious beliefs, marital and social status of women in the society. For instance, a hair style from the forehead which ends at the back of the neck shows the carrier is married; besides, married women carry hair styles from both sides of the head, and finish up at the middle of the head in such a network shape that connect the forehead and back together. On the other hand, maiden style runs from the right side of the head to the left ear. The smaller, and the more hair strands a young lady carries, the more beautiful such a lady will look. Maidens usually carry hair-style of 8 to 14 strands, in braided or wrapped form.

Braiding and binding (the use of thread to make strands) are the two common ways to beautify hair by

Yoruba women in the past. However, braiding (*Irun bida*; knotting hair) comes in different styles, these include: *Ṣuku*- a braiding hair style either short or long knots, it runs from forehead to the back or crown of the head. *Kolẹṣẹ*- as the name suggests (without legs), it is a braiding style, each knot runs from the front and terminates at the back of the head, close to the neck. *Ipakọ-Ẹlẹḍẹ*- this braiding style starts from the back of the head, but ends at the front. *Panumọ*-(keep quite) – hair style, with two different starting points, the back and the front. The knots meet at the center with a little opening. *Ojompeti* (rain soaked ear) – braiding starts from one side of the head, ends close to the ear. All these have been taken over by perming or applying chemical to the hair to straighten it, the hair is then put in rollers and head put under the standing dryer for about 30 minutes to one hour. Some will braid with attachment (synthetic hair) to make long braids. Children of nowadays are not acquainted with these traditional hairdos.

YORUBA TRIBAL MARK

The interesting feature of Yoruba physical appearance which is fast disappearing because of the extant laws, and international campaign, is the tribal marks. Tribal or facial mark- is a specific mark, which comes in different shapes and sizes, commonly found on the face. There are various tribal marks, by different ethnic groups within Yoruba nation. The Ijẹsa people are known by "*Pele*." *Pele*, is a-four-horizontal-line; a-quarter-of-an-inch-long made on the cheeks on both sides of the mouth. The Ondo natives of (Ondo State) are identified by half-an-inch-vertical lines on both sides of the nose down to the mouth (marks are thick and long). Other Yoruba ethnic groups have different types of facial marks; Ogbomoso natives of (Oyo State) are identified by multiple straight and curved lines (*Gombo*) on both sides of the face. Other sub-groups within Yoruba nation have only curved lines on both sides of their face. Even, a particular mark, may have varieties among neighbors; for instance, *Pele* has about three versions: *Pele Ijẹsa* (discussed) *Pele Ekiti* (quarter-of-an-inch-horizontal-line) and *Pele Akoko* (about the same length, but comes in either vertical or horizontal format); the style will depend on Akoko by Ekiti, Bini and Okun neighbors. The purpose of facial marks in the past was to identify each group within Yoruba nation, to beautify, and to identify slaves. Because of the health implications and several abuses, it has become an outlaw practice in Nigeria.

Yoruba has the following tribal marks: *Abaja*, *Kẹkẹ* or *Gombo*, *Ture*, *Pele*, *Mande*, *Jamgbadi*.

YORUBA FOOD

Yoruba people have a variety of food items from where common or locally based foods are made. Prominent among these food items are:

Yam-	Water-Yam, Coco-Yam, Yellow-Yam,
Potatoes,	
Grains-	Iresi (Rice), Ewa (Beans), (White/
Brown/Black)	
Cereal-	Millet, Soya-Beans, Sorghum,
Plantains-	<i>Paranta, Ogbagba</i>
Corn-	Brown/Red
Wheat	<i>Oka, Opa-Etun, Oka-Baba</i>
Cassava-	<i>Ege, Gbaguda</i>

Vegetable – is a part of balanced diet in every Yoruba homes, it includes leafy and fruit/seed based vegetables.

Vegetable/Leafy category-such as: *Efo, Tete, Ebolo, Gbure, Ewedu*

Vegetable/fruit and seed- such as: Onion, Carrot, Pepper (*Rodo, Tataṣe, Wewe*), Tomatoes.

Melon (*Egusi- N'la/kekere*)

Mushroom (*Olu/Oosun*)

Fruits- Yoruba has a lot of fruit bearing trees, which for centuries were part of their dietary composition, and sources of materials for local medicines. Some of these trees include:

Orange	<i>Qsan</i>
Lime	<i>Qsan-wewe</i>
Cherry	<i>Agbalumọ</i>
Cashew	<i>Kaṣu</i>
Pine-Apple	<i>Ope-Oyinbo</i>
Paw-paw	<i>Ibepe</i>
Palm-Nut/Date	<i>Eyin</i>
Palm-Kernel	<i>Ekuro</i>
Mango	<i>Mangoro</i>
Locust Bean	<i>Iru-Woro/Pete</i>
Wall-Nut	<i>Awusa</i>
Sugar-	<i>CaneIreke</i>

OIL PRODUCTS AND THEIR SOURCES

Palm-Oil from Palm Tree	<i>Epo-pupa</i>
Vegetable Oil	<i>Ororo</i>
Melon oil from melon seeds	<i>Egusi</i>
Ground-Nut oil from ground-nut seeds	<i>Epa</i>
Castor oil	<i>Ororo</i>
Palm-Kernel oil from processed palm-nuts	<i>Adin-Eyan</i>
Coco-nut oil from coco-nut	<i>Adin-Agbon</i>
Meat based foods from domestic and wild animals	
Goat	<i>Ewure/Mee, Obuko</i>
Sheep	<i>Agutan, Agbo</i>
Cattle	<i>Malu</i>
Pig	<i>Elede</i>
Chicken based meat-	Fowl, Duck, Turkey, Hen, Guinea Fowl

Wild games of various types- herbivorous, carnivorous and insectivorous. Meaty foods also include sea foods of different types such as fish, shrimps, and crabs and from animals which habitation is very close to water- like crocodile and alligator.

SOUP/STEW AND SPICES

Efo- has variety; *efo* stew will also depend on the accompanied meal. This stew can be made quickly for exigency. Time consuming vegetable stew of different kind is made for ceremonies. There is *Gbegiri*- (Bean stew) a rich Yoruba stew common in Oyo, Ibadan, Oke-Ogun, Osun. It is for foods like pounded-yam (*Iyan*), yam-flour (*Amala*) and for *Eba* (made from Cassava flour). Other stews include plain pepper stew, the viscous vegetable (*Ewedu*), *Ogbona*- another viscous soup to eat foods like *Amala, Iyan, Eba* and *Fufu*.

MAJOR CHALLENGES ON EATING HABITS

The modern Yoruba family and youths now eat fast foods, such as Noodles, Meat pie, etc. Foods are stored in the freezer for long period of time and they lose their nutrient. The people are beginning to experience health challenges that were strange to their fore-parents who eat fresh vegetables and other foods straight from the farm. Nigerian children are beginning to record health issues such as diabetes mellitus and obesity (Oguntola, 2011; Ayo-Aderele, 2013).

GREETINGS IN YORUBA

Yoruba attached great importance to greetings, every occasion, season, job, and event has appropriate greetings. Anyone who lacks greeting courtesy is considered uncultured, and uncivilized.

Daily common greetings:*Ekaaro* (Good morning),
Ekaa san(Good afternoon),

Ekaale (Good evening)

Greetings by Jobs:

Traders/Sellers *E ku iṣe o.*
E o ta o.Aje a wo igba o, E ku
oro aje (you will sell)

Blacksmith *Araye o*

Response *Ogun a gbe O. Araye ni t'Ogun*

Cloth Weaver: *Ojugbooro O. Obalufe a gbe O*

Hair Dresser: *Oju gbooro o*

Response: *Oya a ya o*

Native Doctor: *Ewe a je o*

Carver of Craftman: *E ku ona*

Response: *Ona a wo oju o*

Hunter: *A re pa ni t'Ogun. A re pa ni t'asa*

Response: *Oguna gbe yin o. A dupe o*

Palm Wine Tapper: *Igba a roooo; Emọ se o*

Response: *Emọ se ni t' Ajao, ni t' adan*

MODERNISATION AND CHALLENGE TO OMOLUWABI

Omoluwabi is quintessential Yoruba. *Omoluwabi* is not lazy. *Omoluwabi* cherishes industry and he earns respect and accomplishments through hard work. *Omoluwabi* is ever truthful. An *Omoluwabi* will NEVER tell lies under any circumstance. S/he is bold and courageous. S/he will not steal, because he hates anything that will bring shame to his family or to himself. With increasing influx of modernisation, globalization and technology the sacred and formally cherished Yoruba culture and tradition has been relegated to the background. The present generation particularly the younger ones are not interested in the culture but instead embrace the western culture. The age long concept of *OMOLUWABI* is almost no longer in practice. Monetisation and the quest to get rich quick has pervaded the fabric of the society, *omoluabi* is now an aberration while corruption is widely celebrated (Fafunwa, 1971).

The sum total of Yoruba philosophy is *Iwa l'ewa* meaning "Character is beauty". And to the Yoruba, attitude determines your altitude. Take away a man's culture; his entire being is rendered prostrate. There is therefore a dying need to restore and transmit the Yoruba culture to younger generation so that it does not go into extinction whatever means now pervades action like some dying cultures. Yoruba boys traditionally prostrate and girls kneel down to greet, this is already fading out in most urban families where the language of communication is English.

THE MOTHER TONGUE AND ITS ADVANTAGES

The use of mother tongue is being discouraged in most urban Yoruba families. English is replacing the mother tongue, which is different variety of Yoruba dialects. Some parents are of the view that since English is Nigeria's official language, language of instruction in school and language of examination, they prefer their children to be grounded in English rather than Yoruba (Wong Fillmore, 1991). Textbooks are written in English and this has encouraged the embrace of English language in schools. Research has confirmed that children who are fluent in their mother tongue speak other languages well and comprehend faster. Languages are conduits for indigenous cultures that have real value in modern world Bernard, (1997).

Students who are not being passed down their languages and cultures are often not successfully assimilating into the more positive aspects of mainstream culture. Instead, caught between two cultures without a thorough cultural foundation laid in the home, they often don't learn their tribal language or English very well and are prone to join

gangs to seek the cultural identity and sense of belonging that is being denied them along with their ancestral language (Hirsch, 1987; Holm, & Holm, 1995).

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND MOTHER TONGUE.

We argue for keeping indigenous languages alive so that they do not go into extinction and for cultural identity of the people. We see these historically, what is supposed to be second language (English) has indeed over-taken the indigenous language. Yoruba can now be considered school-based second language which has not led to widespread "communicative competency" (the ability to carry on a sustained conversation) in Yoruba for most students. It is extremely important to use language teaching methods in schools that will prepare and encourage students to use the Yoruba language they are learning outside of school. Reyhner and Tennant (1995) draw from the work of Krashen, Lozanov, and Berlitz five principles that need addressing, with varying degrees of emphasis, in effective language-teaching programs: 1) Putting primary emphasis on *communication*, not grammar, 2) Using *context* that is real or at least realistic, 3) Processing *content* of high interest to the learner, 4) Adjusting the pace of instruction to the students' progress, including moving from simple to complex (generally speaking), emphasizing speaking over speaking correctly, and putting comprehension before completion, and finally 5) Correcting students through modelling.

CONCLUSION

Culture is germane regarding the identification of people. It is the majorly attribute resulting in the behavioural characteristic of different groups. It is consequently exhibited by the different members of the group. The language (particularly the dialect), dressing, food, hairstyle, music and aspect of culture which is group specific shows diversity. The Yoruba cultural values, ethics and norms have been bastardized in the name of civilization and western education. The believe in the phenomenon of "omoluwabi" has nose-dived like meteor in the night sky and the younger ones find it difficult to respect their elders. The neglect of Yoruba cultural value and good attitudes is a thing of concern to the wise in the land of "Olofin Oodua, Onipopo of Popo, Oranmiyan, Orangun ile-ila, Elejelumope, and onitagi olele". The departed Yoruba legends and titans are weeping in their grave, on account of the stupendous shrinking space available to traditional Yoruba values and ethics.

The understanding of Yoruba culture begins with the core interest and understanding of our Language. The richness of our culture, tradition, wisdom, witticism and varied expressions lie in our language. The concept of

Omoluwabi should be replaced to its esteemed position in the society. Modernization is good, but its replacement with our shared culture and tradition is dangerous. The Yoruba Language should not be relegated totally. Young lads should be taught the language right from the stage when they start talking, in primary schools, junior and senior secondary school. In fact, it is recommended credit in the indigenous should be a major requirement for further studies in tertiary institutions.

Many of our core value from the culture are already abolished particularly among the elite. Below are few of these values already relegated include: substitution of Suku for fixing of weave-on, Iyan for poundo, Apala for Hip Hop, Aran for Jeans, etc. hence there a need for change in appreciating our culture because failure of this can be dangerous to the un born generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that Parents should speak their dialect to their children at home.

Private schools in the south-west should be compelled to teach Yoruba language. The mass media should be encouraged to air programmes in Yoruba through corporate sponsorship. Mothers should teach their children to both cook and eat local food. The youth should be encouraged to wear traditional attire, speak Yoruba and eat local diet, acting in accordance with this will go a long way to revitalise our culture and also making the culture more valuable. The new school curriculum of making indigenous languages elective should be discouraged. They should continue to be compulsory subjects in all schools.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution of the research assistant: Miss Oluwatosin Ajayi into the work.

REFERENCES

- Adewale, S. A. (1986). Ethics in Ifa. In Abogunrin, S. O. (Ed.), *Religion and Ethics in Nigeria* (pp. 60-71). Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press.
- Akintoye (2010). *A History of the yoruba people*. Dakar.
- Akogun, T. A. (2011). *Culture, identity and emancipation: Challenge to the yoruba race*. A key note address delivered at the Olokun Festiva.
- Ayo-Aderele, S. (2013, July). Wrong foods, inactivity can make your child obese. *Punch*, 9. Retrieved July 23, 2013 from <https://www.google.com/search?q=Wrong+foods%2C+inactivity+can+make+your+child+obese&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-beta&channel=fflb>

- Babatunde, E. D. (1983). Kinshind behaviour and patrilineal ideology: A case study of ketu, Yoruba. *The Journal of business and Social studies (n.s.)*, 6, 51-65.
- Babatunde, E. D. (1992). Culture, religion and the self: a Critical Study of bini and Yoruba value systems in change. Lewiton, N Y: Edwin Mallen Press.
- Bascom, W. A. (1969). *Ifa Divination; Communication between gods and men in west Africa* (pp. 493-497). Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.
- Bascom, William (1969). *The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*, New York.
- Caderell, B. M., & Bradley, R. Hh. (1984). *Home observation for Measurement of the environment*. Little rock, or: University of Arkansas.
- CIA World Fact book. (2012). "Yoruba 22%" out of a population of 170.1 million (2012 estimate).
- Eades, J. S. (1980). *The yoruba today*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.
- Fadipe, N. A. (1970). *The sociology of the yoruba*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1971). *History of Nigerian higher education*. Lagos: Macmillan & Co (Nigeria) Ltd.
- Hirsch, E. D., Jr. (1987). *Cultural literacy: What every American needs to know*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Hofstede, G. (1997). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Holm, A., & Holm, W. (1995). Navajo language education: Retrospect and prospects. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 19(1), 141-167).
- Johnson, Samuel (1921). *History of the Yorubas*. London.
- Kemmer, I, A, (1989). *Research result from phase 1: Child development for the computer age project*. Nigeria Component of the tufts- Unicef-jnsp three country positive deviance in Nutrition Research Project. New York: UNICEF.
- Oguntola, S. (2011). SIDCAIN co-opts children into walking diabetes out of Nigeria. *Nigerian Tribune Thursday*, 24 November 2011. Retrieved 23 July, 2013 from <http://tribune.com.ng/index.php/natural-health/31746-sidcain-co-opts-children-into-walking-diabetes-out-of-nigeria>
- Ogunyemi, Yemi D. (Yemi D. Prince). (2010). *The Oral Traditions in Ile-Ife (The Yoruba People and their Book of Enlightenment)*. Palo Alto, USA: Academica Press.
- Reyhner, J., & Tennant, E. (1995). *Maintaining and renewing native languages*. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 19, 279-304.
- Wong Fillmore, L. (1991). When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 6, 323-346.